I believe everything that MS has been accused of is patently true, and
they should be spit up and watched carefully for anticompetitive and
predatory behavior ... of which they practice regularly in the market.

I have a friend who is the IT Director for a very large asian laptop and
desktop computer manufacturer. They ship MS software standard on their
system, and also employ many thousand people here in their US
headquarters. He tells me every time MS comes out with a new product
(dot release or brand new), the MS "thugs" come to see him a few months
ahead of release to "emphasize" that he should install and be using this
new product or release on all his desktop systems when the production
version is available, which of course requires him to issue a
substantial purchase order. If he does not order and install this new
software, his company will not be allowed to ship the new MS software to
their customers on the laptops and desktop systems! ... yes this is
blackmail! But, they can't do anything about it.

Now any IT manager knows you never install the first release of any new
software on your production systems ... you install it in a test
environment first, until all the bugs are out and then roll it out to
your users. This is especially true with MS Windows, since they usually
get it right the 3rd time, after copying some other innovative product
in the market, embedding it in their OS or giving it away for free to
put the other company out of business. So, my friend is forced to play
this game with the MS thugs, giving them their purchase order, telling
them he's installing it on all their desktops, but only installing it on
selected, non-critical systems. When the MS thugs come to check this
out, he takes them to each department and shows them only a small number
of systems that have the software running, then de-installs these
machines after they leave. But, in the end, MS wins because they get
their money and they can say that the new software is being used by
certain companies (when is really isn't). Yet, since my friend looks at
MS as the "defacto" standard supplier of operating systems and office
productivity software, and doesn't want to be "blacklisted" in his
profession, he plays this game to keep his job. Hmmmm..... doesn't
this sound like IBM in the 60's!

I know the current administration doesn't favor the breaking up of
Microsoft. I'm actually a republican and absolutely believe in letting
the markets work things out thru competition. But, I've seen so much
over the years in predatory and monopolistic behavior that I believe MS
will eventually take all innovation out of the market, and continue to
put competitors out of business thru this behavior. MS always releases
inferior software the first time ... they wait to see what competition

does, then just copies them and either includes the functionality in Windows, or releases a product to compete which is for free or at a substantial discount over their competitor. Look at innovations like Java, Quicktime, MP3, streaming video, XML, etc. (not to mention the original word processors, spreadsheets, and presentation packages) All of these "open" standards have been changed slightly, included in a microsoft product, making them proprietary ... only working under MS software. Example, look at the number of web sites now that ONLY are viewable on a Windows system with Internet Explorer! This is because of what they did with Java ... first saying they will license it from Sun and abide by the standard, then changing it under ActiveX and making it proprietary. They are doing the same thing with XML now ... under their .NET initiative. What them twist the XML standards to their own version, then force their developer community to use it.

I have been in the computer hardware and software business for 20 years .. and have quite a few business associates who have echoed these same observations over the years. Microsoft is a monopoly and it's leaders are laughing all the way to the bank. The difference between Bill Gates and IBM in the 60's is that IBM had blinders on and was too big and entrenched in its mainframe technology to change quickly ... Gates doesn't believe that any of his tactics are bad for consumers of computing ... he's paranoid and will continue to take new markets and put competitors our of business without hesitation ... at the cost of innovation and value to the consumer.

Paul Hewitt